

COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

1. This Policy is entitled the “*Council Code of Conduct Policy*”.
2. The public expects the highest standards of professional conduct from Councillors elected to local government. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for the ethical and inter-personal conduct of Councillors, Warden and Deputy Warden of Council ("Councillors"). The Council is answerable to the community through democratic processes and this Code will assist in providing for the good government of the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

3. Standards of Conduct

Councillors shall uphold the law and at all times:

- a) Seek to advance the common good of the Municipality as a whole while conscientiously representing the communities they serve;
- b) Perform the functions of office truly, faithfully and impartially to the best of their knowledge and ability in accordance with the following core values:
 - (i) Integrity - giving the Municipality's interests absolute priority over private individual interests;
 - (ii) Honesty - being truthful and open;
 - (iii) Objectivity - making decisions based on a careful and fair analysis of the facts;
 - (iv) Accountability - being accountable to each other and the public for decisions taken;
 - (v) Leadership - confronting challenges and providing direction on the issues of the day.
- c) Uphold this Code as a means of promoting the standards of behavior expected of Councillors and enhancing the credibility and integrity of Council in the broader community.

4. Council Responsibilities

The Council (or its designated committee) will:

- a) review the Municipality's Code of Conduct as required and make any amendments considered appropriate;
- b) review, consider or take other action concerning any violation of the Code of Conduct which is referred to Council for consideration.

Where there is any conflict between the Code of Conduct and the requirements of any statute of the provincial or federal government, provincial or federal statutes shall take precedence.

5. Councillor Responsibilities

a) Conduct to be Observed

Councillors are agents of the public whose primary objective is to address the needs of the citizens. As such, they're entrusted with upholding and adhering to the by-laws of the Municipality as well as all applicable provincial and federal laws. As public servants, Councillors must observe a high standard of morality in the conduct of their official duties and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of their offices, regardless of their personal or financial interests.

b) Dedicated Service

All Councillors should faithfully work towards developing programs to address the needs of the citizens in the course of their duties. Councillors should strive to perform at a level which is expected of those who work in the public's interest.

c) Respect for Decision Making Process

All Councillors recognize the responsibility of the Warden to accurately communicate the decisions of the Council, even if they disagree with such decisions, such that respect for the decision-making processes of Council is fostered.

d) Disclosure

All Councillors must disclose to the Municipality any non-council appointed boards or committees of which they are active members. Disclosure of such boards or committees will ensure pecuniary interest is not breached per Section 3 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

e) Conduct at Meetings

Councillors shall respect the chair, colleagues, staff and Councillors of the public present during Council meetings or other proceedings of the Municipality. Meetings shall provide an environment for transparent and healthy debate on matters requiring decision-making.

- f) **Release of Confidential Information Prohibited**
No Councillor shall disclose or release to the public any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office, in either oral or written form except when required by law or authorized by the Municipality to do so. Nor shall Councillors use confidential information for personal or private gain, or for the gain of relatives or any person or corporation.
- g) **Gifts and Benefits**
No Councillor shall show favoritism or bias toward any vendor, contractor or others doing business with the Municipality. Councillors are prohibited from accepting gifts or favors from any vendor, contractor or others doing business with the Municipality personally, or through a family Councillor or friend, which could give rise to a reasonable suspicion of influence to show favor or disadvantage to any individual, staff or organization.
- h) **Use of Public Property**
No Councillor shall request or permit the use of municipal-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit, except where such privileges are granted to the general public. Councillors shall ensure that the business of the Municipality is conducted with efficiency and shall avoid waste, abuse and extravagance in the provision or use of municipal resources.
- i) **Obligations to Citizens**
No Councillor shall grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any citizen or group of citizens beyond that which is accorded to all citizens.
- j) **Interpersonal Behavior**
Councillors shall treat every person, including other Councillors, corporate employees, individuals providing services on a contract for service, and the public with dignity, understanding and respect and ensure that their work environment is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- k) **Community Representation**
Councillors shall observe a high standard of professionalism when representing the Municipality and in their dealings with Councillors of the broader community.

6. Good Governance

Councillors accept that effective governance of the Municipality is critical to ensuring that decisions are taken in the best interests of all stakeholders and to enable the Municipality to function as a good corporate citizen.

7. Government Relationships

Councillors recognize the importance of working constructively with other levels of government and organizations in Nova Scotia and beyond to achieve the goals of the Municipality.

8. Conflict of Interest Avoidance

Councillors are committed to making decisions impartially and in the best interests of the Municipality and recognize the importance of fully observing the requirements of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 299 with regard to the disclosure and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

9. Reporting Breaches

Persons who have reason to believe that this Code has been breached in any way are encouraged to bring their concerns forward. No adverse action shall be taken against any Councillor or municipal employee who, acting in good faith, brings forward such information.

10. Corrective Action

Any reported violation of the Code will be subject to investigation by the Council. Violation of this Code by a Councillor may constitute a cause for corrective action. If an investigation finds a Councillor has breached a provision of the Code, Council may impose corrective action commensurate with the nature and severity of the breach, which may include a formal warning or reprimand to the Councillor.

11. CAO Structure

Councillors must direct all requests requiring action from staff to the Chief Administrative Officer per the Municipality's organizational structure.

12. Compliance with Code

Councillors acknowledge the importance of the principles contained in this Code which will be self-regulated by Council. Councillors are required to sign a "Statement of Commitment to the Code" (Attachment A) within seven (7) days of taking the Councillors' oath pursuant to section 147 of the Municipal Elections Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 300.

Appendix A: Statement of Commitment to Council Code of Conduct

I, _____ declare that as a Councillor of the Municipality of the County of Inverness, I acknowledge and support the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Warden/Councillor

Declared this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Before me:

Chief Administrative Officer

Witness